

The Systematic Review Toolbox: finding software to support the systematic review process

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Systematic reviews are necessary to inform evidence-based practice in a wide range of disciplines, with health care being among the most established. Systematic reviews are often time and resource intensive. There are a number of tools available to assist in producing systematic reviews, but it can be challenging to keep up-to-date with the most recent developments in this area.

The Systematic Review Toolbox (SR Toolbox) is the first and, to-date, only dedicated web-based catalogue of tools to support systematic reviews (<http://systematicreviewtools.com/>). The resource was developed in response to a lack of easily accessible information about what tools were currently available. Since its launch in May 2014, the SR Toolbox has been received positively by the academic community (particularly across

The screenshot shows the SR Toolbox website. At the top is a blue header with the SR Toolbox logo on the left, navigation links for 'About', 'Workshops', and 'Contact' in the center, and a workshop announcement on the right: 'Workshop: using software tools to support systematic reviews 6-7 October 2016' with a link to 'Click here for more information'. Below the header, the page is divided into two main sections. The 'Quick Search' section on the left includes a search bar with the placeholder 'Heard of a tool? Try searching for it...', a 'Search' button, and a tweet feed from @SRToolbox. The 'Advanced Search' section on the right features radio buttons for 'Software Tools' (selected) and 'Other Tools', a link to 'Add a New Tool', dropdown menus for 'approach', 'discipline', and 'Cost', a checkbox for 'Any' features, an 'OR' section with a list of features (Protocol Development, Automated Search, Study Selection, Quality Assessment, Data Extraction, Automated Analysis, Text Analysis, Meta-Analysis, Report Write-Up, Collaboration, Document Management) each with a checkbox, and a 'Search' button at the bottom right.

social media) and is actively used by many research staff and students in healthcare. The SR Toolbox has developed a high profile within the systematic review community, most notably establishing links with the Cochrane Collaboration, whose work is recognised as the international gold standard for systematic reviews. The resource was cited in the 2014 #CochraneTech symposium editorial (Elliot et al. 2014) and has been presented at a number of conferences and seminars. Furthermore, a webpage on support tools maintained by Cochrane (<http://tech.cochrane.org/revman/other-resources>) is no longer updated, and now refers visitors to the Systematic Review Toolbox instead.

The Toolbox will be valuable to information specialists supporting systematic reviews and systematic reviewers, because it provides easy access to review tools which might improve the efficiency of review production. The tools also have potential to be useful in supporting other types of research. The SR Toolbox supports all systematic reviews and is a multi-disciplinary resource and it can also be used as a teaching and learning resource. Information specialists providing resources to support their local systematic reviewers may wish to link to the Toolbox from wikis, websites, virtual learning environments, and resource guides. York Health Economics Consortium (YHEC), in association with the Systematic Review Toolbox, have organised two linked workshops in York, UK in October 2016, for researchers to learn about software tools currently available, and to share experiences of using tools in practice. The first workshop (Day 1) will review both commercial and not-for-profit systematic review management packages, with sessions from representatives of Covidence¹, DistillerSR² and EPPI-Reviewer³. The second workshop (Day 2) will review a range of free and commercial tools to support single tasks within the systematic review process. The Toolbox editors welcome suggestions of new resources to add to the website and any other contributions to the development of the site: Contact Chris Marshall at chris.marshall@york.ac.uk

¹ <http://covidence.org/>

² <http://distillercer.com/products/distillersr-systematic-review-software/>

³ <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=3396>